

Motivation or Lack of Motivation: A Case Study of Intermediate English *Book I of Sindh Text Book board*

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Abstract

This paper discusses Intermediate English Book I of Sindh Text Book board, Pakistan, and explores, the motivational force of the book or the major cause of lack of motivational force, to the readers, if exists . The research paper begins with the introduction of the textbook and problem in it faced by the teachers and students. The study has been conducted by employing the perspective of Readers' Response Criticism, which determines how a work affects its reader. The tool of methodology used in the research was qualitative. The data was collected through interview, based on ten questions. The representative sample size was ten English teachers-all females. The sampling technique was simple random. The population of interest for my study was 15 female English Teachers in Government Girls' Degree College Larkana, where as the theoretical population is all English teachers those who teach XI English textbook-I in Sindh, Pakistan. The researcher received high response, which supported the hypothesis. Therefore, the study recommends that the XI English textbook-I should be revised, updated and related to the current and general issues of the readers, so that it may create motivation for both teachers and students.

Key Terms: Outdated Syllabus, Readers, Style, Motivation, Response Critics

INTRODUCTION

Syllabus is the key factor, which, in an academic year, determines the future success of students. It is the document that develops a student's mental and professional progress. Woolcock observes, "The quality of the syllabus is a fairly reliable indicator of the quality of teaching and learning that will take place in a course" (*Constructing a Syllabus*: 2005). Unfortunately, in Sindh (one of the provinces of Pakistan) the issue of outdated textbook, at

Intermediate part one (XI) level, has not been given any attention since four to five decades, though it is of vital importance. The course is the key factor of motivation that makes teaching-learning process successful. Dornyei (2000) argues that “Motivation is responsible for why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity, and how hard they are going to pursue it.” Indeed, the motivation enables one to do something. If it is there in syllabus it will serve a good communication between not only a reader and text but reader and teacher as well. Davis, B.G calls syllabus as a virtual handshake between the instructor and reader for it develops a good relation between not only reader and text but also reader and facilitator (*Tools for Teaching*: 1993).

The Intermediate English Book I is the text book, designed for young learners of Intermediate part one in almost all public or private sector Higher Secondary colleges in Sindh, Pakistan. The text book is published by Sindh Text Book Board Jamshoro, Sindh. The reading texts in Intermediate book one are based on D.H. Spencer and A.S. Hornsby’s *An Intermediate English Course for Adult Learners*, which was published in 1959. The greatest failure of Sindh Textbook Board is that since four to five decades old content has been designed for modern learners. Hence, it lacks standard quality and motivation. The matter aspired to the researcher to conduct a small-scale research over the text book through getting responses of the representative participants and by the textual analysis of the book.

Research Questions

Main Question

- How far is the content of XI English textbook successful to emerge teachers / students motivation?

Sub-Questions

- Does a teacher get a satisfactory response teaching XI English textbook?
- Does the syllabus create transaction between the reader and reading texts in the teaching Learning process?
- How far the content of the syllabus is related to teacher / student life issues?

- How (stylistics) the content of the syllabus affects (affective) the reader in the process of reading?

Hypothesis

The study proposes a directional hypothesis that, Intermediate English Book I by Sindh Text Book Board, Sindh, Pakistan, lacks the force of motivation because of its outdated content.

Objective

The purpose of the study is to raise awareness of course designers about the content of the textbook, because educational material is of great importance, which leads to students' development both professional and personal. On the contrary, outdated syllabus is no way interesting or useful for young learners. Hence, considering the issue problematic especially for Intermediate part one teachers and learners, this area has been chosen for further analysis.

Literature Review

The researcher formulated the theoretical literature review based on Reader Response Criticism. Reader Response Criticism as mentioned by Klomp Stevens and Lary I. Stewart in *A Guide to Literary Criticism and Research*, "concerns with the relationship of text and reader (1992:11) thus, this theory of literature is employed to analyze this issue which declares whether there is an intellectual relation between reader and text or not. No reading text is included in XI English textbook (when we analyze the book under this theory of literature review) which is related to readers life and situations. Stevens and Stewart further observe, "If literature is to speak meaningfully to an audience, it must deal with a situation relevant to them" (1992:27). This is what reader response criticism affirms. On the contrary, the XI English textbook has nothing particular to do with the situation of its readers. A textbook should not only polish reader professionally but personally as well. The later one is possible when the book speaks to its reader, the issues reader is confronting or the people around him / her are confronting. This is how the book enhances the readers' interest and motivation.

Louise Rosenblatt, who in the late 1930s, recognized the active and creative nature of the reader and developed Transactional Readers' Response Theory and suggested in *The Reader, the Text, the Poem*, "our concern should be

with the relation between reader and text” (1978:282). She is looking for the transaction between the reader and text, which takes place with aesthetic approach of the text rather than only simple traditional approach which just focuses on the information contained in the text, as if it were a storehouse of facts and ideas that we could carry with us.

Affective stylistics is another notion of Readers’ Response Criticism that seeks for an effect in the text that prevails as an event; it comes into being as it is read rather than an object that exists in space. Lois Tyson opines in *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*, “Affective stylistics is not a description of the readers’ impressionistic responses but a cognitive analysis of the mental processes produced by specific elements in the text” (2006:175). There are one or two reading texts in the XI English textbook, which emerge little a bit affective mental process, the rest of the reading texts, do not affect readers’ mind for even a short time period. Reading texts in the book do not speak to the reader as a result; the reader only reads the texts taking them as a formality in their academic life. The text should be that much lively that it should speak to its reader.

Methodology

The study was carried out in Government Girls’ Degree College Larkana, Sindh, Pakistan. The tool used in the research was qualitative. Data was collected through interview of teachers. The Interview included 10 questions (See Appendix). For the study purpose the representative sample size was ten English teachers-all females from the 15 size of population in the targeted area, whereas theoretical size of interest is all those English teachers who teach at intermediate level in Sindh at present. The sample was selected through the technique of simple random sampling. The participants’ confidence was assured. No personal question was asked except those experiences related to the teaching of XI English textbook. It was formal / structured interview. The teachers were given the questions two days before interview. The data was collected only through interview of teachers. No other tool of data collection was used. The researcher could not involve students’ responses due to the reason of on-going holidays of the students after their final examination and that this is a small-scale study. Thus, this work invites future research to have comprehensive perspective of the issue by the involvement of students too.

Results

The researcher received high response from the representative sample. Eight teachers answered ten questions out of ten whereas two teachers answered nine questions.

Questions No. 1 and 2 which were related to relation between reader and text, got almost the same response from all the participants. Ten out of ten participants declared that the content is no way related to the reader's area of interest in this progressing world. From the text "Pakistan Zindaabad" (reading text one) to "Silence" (reading text fourteen), no text seems to be touching to the readers' life experience and issues. The reading text "Air Travel", "The Miracle of Radio" and "By Car across Europe" were targeted in these questions and were declared as the most irrelevant and non-touching to readers' life.

Question No. 3 and 4, which were seeking in the textbook the important and useful information at Intermediate level; these questions were answered amazingly. For each of the participants expressed sad feelings because they believe that there is little rather no important or useful information which is suitable for intermediate level students; six of the participants criticized the text "Pakistan Zindaabad" (reading text one). This reading text has quite unimportant objectives and useless at this level of learners. The objectives of this text are more applicable and justifiable for the middle classes of learners. The objectives of the text target the following areas to tell the learners:

- The First Governor General of Pakistan
- The Last Viceroy of India
- The time and place of Pakistan Resolution
- The place of Quaid-e-Azam's tomb etc (Intermediate English book one page:4).

This kind of objective is no way related to the progressing and developing approach of the learners at this stage. Five teachers targeted the text "The United Nations" (reading text four) for answering these questions. One of them said, to quote her words, "The title of the text United Nations suggests that the text includes good and updated information in the text. However, unfortunately, when one reads the text he / she comes to know that there the

unimportant and useless information in the text is given. The text discusses that UNO has **92** members, whereas at present it avails the membership of more than **192** countries. The text discusses only the main organs of the organization rather than functions and the essence of the organization. This text may be important when it is updated. The latest works, goals, objectives and achievements should be mentioned to generate learners' interest in the current issues in the world.

Question number 5 was enquiring whether any text in the book leaves longer effect on the learners' mind. Eight participants responded the question. The two of the participants did not answer the question. The response revealed disfavor for the book. The fiction based text "My Bank Account" (reading text four); "The Wolves of Cernogratz" (reading text eight) and "The Hostile Witness" (reading text thirteen) were taken as subject in answering this question. They commented on the texts as effective on the readers' mind for a long time whereas the rest of the reading texts show little concern with the effectiveness of the minds.

Questions Nos. 6 and 7 were the most important questions. These were seeking for the updated information in the book. The answers were given surprisingly by all ten participants. Six of the participants highlighted the importance of the updated syllabus in the current progressing condition of intellectual society. The era reflects developments in almost all the spheres of life, in that situation where a student is aware of the progressing nature of the things surrounding them, an outdated (almost four to five decades old content) in their syllabus seems unreasonable and unjustifiable. If the syllabus is so much outdated it cannot deliver any meaningful thing in the meaningful sense. One of the participants gave practical example of life; she said to quote her word, "If we observe ourselves, we will find the progressive nature in ourselves. We do not want anything, which is that much outdated, we dress ourselves according to current fashions, we use latest technologies like laptop, mobile phones, iPod etc. that keep us connected to the world and even perform the functions of T.V., radio-recording audio / video and computer. All show that we keep ourselves updated. However, in academic life in Intermediate level he / she find the outdated content. It becomes just compulsion to read only, yes to read only not to understand or implement in life because it lacks the motivational force." This participant highlighted a feature of Readers' Response Criticism, that the text should read the life experiences of the reader. The reading stuff should mirror the reader's experiences. The text "My Bank

Account” (reading text four) was also targeted in the sense that it propagates something foolish in human nature. In the text, a reader comes to know how a person gets excitement and behaves foolishly just for opening an account whereas in this modern world an uneducated person has more than two bank accounts. There should be a text instead of this, which tells a reader how a person can do online banking transaction, online business in banks etc. The text “The Miracle of Radio” (reading text five) is indeed a miracle when it is taught as a miracle in the modern society, where a five years old child can use mobiles, surf internet and play games on mobiles. If we tell them radio as a miracle at their 17 years age, they would be motivated in no sense. The texts discuss about black and white television and Morse Codes whereas the modern technologies have started establishing homes in other planets but the students of XI Sindh Pakistan still read radio as a miracle. Rather these texts based on inventions, radio and aero planes should be replaced with the modern technologies like use of LEDs, multimedia, mobile phones etc. today readers have no interest in what happened to Birkenhead Drill a centuries ago, rather they want to know the problems and issues confronting their society, country and globalised world at large and challenges to solve the problems. Two texts “Science and Society” (reading text twelve) and “Science and Scientists” (reading text eleven) do not motivate students to have practice of science in life to be scientists; they just indulge students in differentiating objectives and prejudiced thinking. Both texts refer to the past whereas recent scientific achievements are not the part of it. I must quote here the exact words of a participant, as she said, “Everything in the world gets moderation with the passage of time but the English textbook of XI proves inefficiency of the Sindh Textbook Board. For since four to five decades the course has not been revised as the same book was learnt by our forefathers too.”

The reading text six, “Air Travel” reflects the modern fighter jet that has a top speed of over 2400 km per hour, but nowadays-domestic flights can have a speed of 6000 km per hour. The text shows doubts to achieve such speed but modern era has touched the satellite worlds.

One of the participants pointed out a different factor, those readers of the targeted level face in the textbook, which is they not only lose interest and motivation but get bored also. The outdated content creates boredom in the class because they are not activity based.

Question Nos. 8 and 9, which were related to design and quality of the book

answered by all ten teachers. The result of the question pointed out that cheap quality of the paper and colorless design of the book cannot enhance students' interest and motivation. It is costmary textbook, its paper design and weight and quality is cheap and sub-standard.

Question No. 10 was related to the demand of the reader of intermediate level, like activity based material, discussions on practical issues, language competency and so on. The response to this question like all other questions supported the hypothetical statement. Nine teachers answered the question. The book does not include any activity based reading text. No text develops readers' capabilities to solve the practical problem and the language used in the book is quite ancient. Uses of many words in various texts have gone extinct; it does not groom readers' language competency. There are a number of conceptual, pedagogical, language and printing mistakes in the book and the book suggests last but not the least, the same old method of reading, meaning and solving exercises. The reading text seven, "Letters" can be taken as an example to point out how the reader may flourish communication or language competency. The title of the text suggests skill of writing a letter, but the text does not include any directions of writing a letter. The text has only the sample of letters, and those are inter-related to each other even in the exercise, the questions are from the matter within the text of letters rather than the manner or style of writing a letter. This shows that the text pays attention to the matter of the letters not the form or manner of the letter.

Therefore, the textbook, in no way, meets the demand of the learners, be it language competency, which is the need of our intermediate learners in this time of competition. Beside, no text develops the discussion on the practical life issues of the readers, which could help readers to involve in the book with great enthusiasm to be capable of handling the matters of the life courageously. The exercise of each reading text is not suggesting any modern methodology of teaching and activities.

This is the reason that students are switching to Cambridge system of academics. Corder (1973:202) writes, "Language teaching can only be successful when the objectives of teaching match the demand of the learners."

Conclusion

The English textbook at Intermediate (Part-I) by Sindh Textbook Board

Jamshoro is a big issue on which this small-scale research has put light. The researcher noticed students' less interest and motivations in the book due to its outdated content and style. Hence, to confirm the issues and to suggest and recommend the high authorities this research was conducted. The research was conducted through interview of ten female teachers in Government Girls' Degree College Larkana. Each teacher was asked ten questions. The participants provided rich data, which is analyzed and discussed through this paper.

The data supported the hypothesis. The questions asked from the participants were almost responded with a great disfavor and contempt for the XI English textbook-I because the textbook is outdated in content, style and design. The reading texts discussed in the data analysis in details shows that the textbook in all ways is unreasonably and unjustifiably included. They may neither enhance readers' motivation nor develop interest, and in such condition, the teaching-learning process becomes ill. The learners' creative process is affected and they become traditional certificate holders.

The research suggests the course designers and high authorities to take the matter seriously and to revise and update the course and improve the quality of the papers, design of the book to grasp students' attraction and interest and make it a practice time to time because it not only demoralizes the interest of our youth of this area but if left continued in the future as a whimsical horse also that could be catastrophic for the professional developments of them.

The study recommends the future researchers to have in-depth study of the issue by involving various sources, which this small-scale research lacks. The researcher ends with a hope to see research literature on this issue overlapping the limitations of this research in the days ahead so that the implications of the findings may be extended beyond participants who actually participated in the study.

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(Appendix)

The questions asked in interview:

1. How far is the content of Xi-English textbook related to reader's life issues?
2. How far the syllabus create transaction between the reader and reading texts in the teaching Learning process?
3. In what ways any reading text in the book is important at the level of Intermediate part one?
4. To what level any reading text in the book is useful at the level of Intermediate part one?
5. How much is the syllabus effective to catch reader's mind for long time?
6. Is the book revised time to time?
7. Which reading text gives updated information?
8. What role the design of the book plays in discouraging / encouraging the reader's motivation?
9. How much the quality of the book and its paper is motivating?
10. To what level the reading texts meet the demands of the reader?